

Strategies - Depression

Avoid negative comments or criticism.

Students with depression are already hyper-aware of negative comments and events in their environment. Even constructive criticism can have a negative connotation for these students. Instead:

1. Over praise--even if they brush it off
2. Instead of constructive criticism, say, "This was a great start, let's see if we can make this even better."

Help students stay organized.

Students with depression often get overwhelmed when multiple projects or assignments are going on at once. Therefore, they may need help with planning and breaking work down into more manageable chunks with more due dates along the way instead of one due date far off in the future.

Have simple, clear directions.

Providing students with short, concise, and visual directions can help them focus on what is important to accomplish.

Reduce classroom pressures and workload.

Make sure students are only required to complete enough problems or enough work to show mastery of a skill or concept.

Be a good listener.

Don't force the student to talk, but let them know you are always willing to listen.

Create an inviting classroom by demonstrating unconditional acceptance of all students.

This does not mean you accept all behaviors, but they need to feel like they will not be judged or rejected for how they are feeling.

Find out what motivates the student.

It is hard for these students to be self-motivated or to engage in learning, so finding out what might be highly engaging will help keep their attention and foster learning.

Make accommodations for assignments and exams.

- Allow the student to go to a quiet space.
- Give extra time.
- Allow more time for the students to respond when asking questions or making requests.
- Check regularly to ensure class assignments are done.
- Use a variety of assessment methods so students can demonstrate knowledge using their stronger skills.

Teach problem-solving strategies.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM
 - a. What are you trying to find or do?
 - b. What do you know?
 - c. Who or what is involved in the problem?
 - d. How do I feel?
2. DEVISING A PLAN
 - a. What are all my options?
 - b. What steps are needed to carry out each option?
 - c. How might others react/What would be the consequences?
3. CARRYING OUT THE PLAN
 - a. Take each step that you outlined in step 2
4. 4. LOOKING BACK
 - a. How did that work for me?
 - b. How do I feel now?
 - c. Do I need to try something else or is the problem resolved?

Teach goal setting.

This can help motivate a student to start and follow through with something. Reaching easily achievable goals can begin building their self-worth

Encourage involvement in physical activities.

Research has shown that physical activity can help alleviate the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Encourage positive self-talk.

"It's okay to make mistakes." Help them learn to avoid negative and all-encompassing language such as "always" and "never."

Encourage positive thinking.

Have students make colorful posters they can take home that contain positive messages about themselves. Instruct them to say the positive messages each day.

Help the student make connections with other people.

Once you have made a connection with the student, don't let it stop there; help him or her to develop relationships with other staff who are sensitive to the needs of students with depression. Help him or her to develop relationships with supportive peers.

Encourage volunteering.

Having the student work with others for a good cause can promote feelings of positive well-being.